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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/662,838	09/15/2003	Laurence F. Lyons	046374-0117	1220

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EXAMINER

FERGUSON, LAWRENCE D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1774

DATE MAILED: 09/26/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/662,838

Applicant(s)

LYONS, LAURENCE F.

Examiner

Lawrence D. Ferguson

Art Unit

1774

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/15/03.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Objection

1. Claim 30 is objected to. In instant claim 30, the term "perm" should be permeability. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102(b)

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1, 3, 7-11, 14-19, 21 and 26-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hartkemeyer (U.S. 4,684,562).

Hartkemeyer discloses a floor underlayment comprising an intermediate layer made of cork (first layer) disposed underneath a top sheet (third layer) and a liquid resistant bottom sheet (second layer) constructed of foam material, where the three layers are bonded together by an adhesive applied between the sheets (column 2, lines 20-37) where the mat is bonded to a base, such as a garage floor (column 1, lines 8-11 and 50-54) which are known to be concrete. Hartkemeyer further discloses the top layer can be formed of any material (column 3, lines 5-7). Because Hartkemeyer discloses a

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first and second layer bonded together, as claimed, the peel strength of the bond and permeability rating are inherent features. The claiming of a new use, new function or unknown property which is inherently present in the prior art does not necessarily make the claim patentable. In re Best, 562 F.2d 1252, 1254, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). Mere recitation of newly-discovered function or property, inherently possessed by things in prior art, does not cause claim drawn to those things to distinguish over prior art. The Patent Office can require applicant to prove that subject matter shown to be in prior art does not possess characteristic relied on where it has reason to believe that functional limitation asserted to be critical for establishing novelty in claimed subject matter may be inherent characteristic of prior art; this burden of proof is applicable to product and process claims reasonably considered as possessing allegedly inherent characteristics.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 5-6, 12-13 and 23-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hartkemeyer (U.S. 4,684,562).

Hartkemeyer is relied upon for claims 1 and 14. Hartkemeyer does not explicitly disclose width or thickness. Such features are properties which can be easily determined by one of ordinary skill in the art. With regard to the limitation of the width and thickness, absent a showing of unexpected results, it is obvious to modify the conditions of a composition because they are merely the result of routine experimentation. The experimental modification of prior art in order to optimize operation conditions (e.g. width and thickness) fails to render claims patentable in the absence of unexpected results. All of the aforementioned limitations are optimizable as they directly affect the durability of the flooring system. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the flooring system with the limitations of the width and thickness since it has been held that discovering an optimum value of a result effective variable involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Boesch*, 617 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103(a)

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 2, 20 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hartkemeyer (U.S. 4,684,562) in view of Thiers (U.S. 6,786,019).

Hartkemeyer is relied upon for claims 1 and 14. Hartkemeyer does not teach the third layer having a resistance to moisture permeability or including wood material. Thiers teaches a floor covering (column 1, lines 33-37) having a top layer consisting of a wood pattern and being impermeable and moisture proof (column 3, lines 15-35). Hartkemeyer and Thiers are both directed to flooring systems. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have included the impermeable, moisture proof wood top layer, as taught in Thiers, in the top layer of the flooring system of Hartkemeyer because the moisture proof material provides protection for the floor from outside elements and from being ruined by mildew buildup.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lawrence Ferguson whose telephone number is 571-272-1522. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:00 AM – 5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rena Dye, can be reached on 571-272-3186. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

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For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

L.F.

L. Ferguson
Patent Examiner
AU 1774


RENA DYE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
A.O. 1774 9/19/05